



# WASHOE COUNTY

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Comptroller CS  
HR SL  
Grant Mgt. N/A

## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 14, 2014

**DATE:** September 23, 2014  
**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**FROM:** Celeste Wallick, Safety Officer  
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Aaron Kenneston, Emergency Manager  
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**THROUGH:** Paul McArthur, Comptroller  
Al Rogers, Management Services Director  
**SUBJECT:** Approve the May 14, 2014 recommended revisions to the Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures and rename the policy to Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy.

(All Commission Districts)

### SUMMARY

Recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve the May 14, 2014 recommended revisions to the Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures and rename the policy to the Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy.

In March of 2013, the Workplace Safety Committee was formed (not to be confused with the Washoe County Safety Committee). The Workplace Safety Committee was a cross-functional work group consisting of key department heads, law enforcement, the Fusion Center, safety officer and emergency manager. The mission of the group was to improve employee safety by identifying and preparing for emergency situations that could reasonably occur.

The committee was successful in directing facility risk assessments and suggestions for improvement, employee training, improving communications, and drafting changes to the Evacuation policy so it includes instruction for actions in addition to evacuation, such as earthquake preparedness, bomb threats, sheltering in place and lockdown.

The revisions of the Workplace Safety Committee were approved by the Washoe County Safety Committee on May 14, 2014.

Further actions regarding risk assessments and emergency actions will be coordinated by the Emergency Preparedness Council.

**Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Safe, secure and healthy communities.

AGENDA ITEM # 10C

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners approved the existing Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures on January 26, 1993.

### **BACKGROUND**

OSHA General Industry Regulations 29CFR 1910.38 direct that the employer should address, in writing, emergencies that the employer may reasonably expect in the workplace and train employees so they understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan. This policy, and the corresponding Department Emergency Action Plans that are being developed, are designed to meet that requirement.

Chapter 65 of Washoe County Code governs Safety and Disaster Services. The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) continuously promotes employee safety and disaster preparedness. County Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) are written guidance documents, in compliance with 29 CFR 1910.38, providing information on the actions to be followed by employees in an emergency. County departments maintain and practice emergency procedures for the safety of employees and the public in county facilities.

Safety and disaster procedures are of increased concern as the pace of events threatening the safety of county employees and the public appears to be on the rise, and the consequences of these types of threats nationwide seem to be increasingly more severe. The County Manager assembled a cross-functional workgroup to review existing procedures and recommend updates to the long-standing Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures. The proposed updated policy was vetted by the County Safety Committee, and is now being presented to the BCC for approval. Once the policy is approved, county department heads will update existing department EAPs and begin training employees as well as exercising the new procedures.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the May 14, 2014 recommended revisions to the Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures and rename the policy to Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy.

### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

*"Move to approve the May 14, 2014 recommended revisions to the Washoe County Evacuation Policy and Procedures and rename the policy to Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy."*

# **WASHOE COUNTY EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN POLICY**

**(RECOMMENDED REVISIONS OF MAY 14, 2014 TO REPLACE WASHOE COUNTY EVACUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES APPROVED BY BCC 1-26-1993)**

## **GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners is dedicated to the protection of employees and the public and desires that all departments have in place emergency procedures for the safety of employees and the public during an emergency situation. Emergency Action Plans, in compliance with 29 CFR 1910.38, are written documents providing information on the actions to be followed by employees in case of a workplace emergency.

Departments are to develop procedures that are appropriate for their areas that will supplement the Washoe County Emergency Action Plan Policy.

Emergencies include, but are not limited to: alarm activation in buildings, fires in buildings, natural disasters, civil disturbances, bomb threats, chemical release, violent/terrorist activity, or any other situation requiring immediate emergency action. Situations may require personnel to evacuate the buildings, or to remain within their work area and take shelter.

The department Emergency Action Plan will be presented to all employees in training within their department and is available to employees for review. Employees may contact their department head or Risk Management for information or copies of the Emergency Action Plan, department procedures, or an explanation of their duties under these plans.

Departments overseeing inmates or other detainees will have employees who must perform critical operations before evacuating. The department will establish specific procedures for those persons regarding emergency actions and evacuation within their facilities. No other County departments require personnel to remain to operate critical operations before evacuation.

The execution of this plan shall be the joint responsibility of the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, department heads, and Risk Management.

## **SECTION 1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for:

- The leadership of Emergency Action Plans
- Initiating and directing actions to be taken in case of an emergency situation

Department Heads (or designee) are responsible to:

- Oversee development of departmental Emergency Action Plans that meet the needs of the department
- Ensure employees are trained on the Emergency Action Plans

- Communicate with professional emergency response personnel (law enforcement, fire personnel, etc.), the County Managers Office, Crisis Action Team, and employees
- Request structural evaluations as needed
- Initiate the Continuity of Operations Plan as needed

Employees are responsible to:

- Immediately notify co-workers, department heads, and Responders of emergency situations
- Take appropriate action based on the circumstances

Risk Management is responsible to:

- Develop and maintain the written Emergency Action Plan, including review (at least annually) and updating and distributing as necessary
- Assist departments with department emergency action plans/procedures, training, and drills.

## **SECTION 2. GENERAL INFORMATION**

In order for appropriate emergency actions to successfully take place, emergency equipment (fire extinguishers, sensors, alarms, etc.) must be kept in good working condition with free access to the equipment. Facilities must be maintained by the occupants so that all areas are clean and orderly and all exit paths are clear without any objects protruding into the exit path. Employees shall correct or report situations that need correction whenever necessary

Responders as used within this document, refer to professional Emergency Response personnel (Sheriff, Police, Fire, or other Emergency Operations personnel) having jurisdiction over the incident. Due to a delay between reporting of an emergency situation and Responders arrival and set up on the scene, Responders may not be able to immediately provide employees with information. As soon as possible, information will be provided to employees through Washoe County management.

In an immediate emergency situation, employees must determine their first actions of whether it is safer to stay within the facility or go outside. This determination will usually take place prior to Responders arrival on scene. Department heads will make the determination of appropriate action whenever possible. However, in life or death situations, each employee will need to take the initiative and determine the safest action to take.

The Department Head, County Manager's Office, Risk Management staff, and Facilities Maintenance staff will rely on Responders direction before notifying employees of other actions. Any of the above may give clearance to personnel to re-enter buildings following an evacuation or to cease Shelter in Place. Only Responders from law enforcement may clear employees from a Lockdown situation.

### **SECTION 3. NOTIFICATION OF AN EMERGENCY**

Communication of an emergency situation may be done by alarms, verbal notice (overhead paging system, phone, voice, etc.), electronic communication (e-mail, text, etc.) or any combination of the above.

The first important action is to summon Emergency Responders. Employees are to call 911 (9-911 on an office phone), or activate alarms with a direct connection to 911 immediately.

Notification is then to be given to others within the work area of the emergency situation. Communication will be as determined on the department emergency action plans.

#### **BUILDING WITH ALARM SYSTEMS**

In the event of an alarm sounding:

- Identify the type of alarm by the audible tone (evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown)
- Take immediate action as directed under the department Emergency Action Plan depending on the audible tone of the alarm (evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown)

#### **BUILDING WITHOUT ALARM SYSTEMS**

There are buildings located throughout the County that are not equipped with alarm systems. Notification of an emergency situation may be verbal and/or electronic to personnel in the area of the emergency situation.

When an employee discovers a situation requiring emergency action that employee will:

- Immediately call 911/9-911 and notify the department head and co-workers
- Take immediate action as directed under the department Emergency Action Plan depending on the emergency situation (evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown)

### **SECTION 4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Some emergencies require evacuation or escape procedures, while in some emergencies, it is safer to remain inside. Emergency Action Plans are designed to address response to many potential emergencies, depending on the degree of seriousness. Actions taken by employees should be for the safety of employees and public within County facilities.

The Department Emergency Action Plans may specify additional requirements that are to be implemented in addition to the steps designated below.

### **FIRE OR STRONG SMELL OF SMOKE IN COUNTY BUILDINGS**

If an employee notices a fire or strong smell of smoke within, or immediately adjacent to, a County building, they must immediately notify the fire department and their department head/co-workers.

- If the building has an alarm system – activate the closest pull station (which will notify 911 dispatch) and evacuate
- If the building does not have an alarm system - call 911/9-911, verbally notify all persons in the area, and evacuate.

After making these notifications, employees trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers may attempt to extinguish a fire if it is small.

If employees are not trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers, or the fire is large, they are to close the door to the area where the fire is and initiate an evacuation.

### **BOMB THREAT AND/OR EXPLOSION**

Bomb threats or explosions require special precautions to be taken to protect employees and the public. Employees who receive a bomb threat are to report it to the department head immediately.

The department head will follow the procedures described below:

- Initiate an evacuation of the building - DO NOT use the alarm system\*
- Call 911/9-911 and request the bomb squad. The department head and any person with information regarding a bomb threat are to answer all questions asked by dispatch or bomb squad personnel
- If there are other departments or entities in the building, contact the department head(s) and advise him/her of the situation so they may initiate evacuation
- Contact the County Manager's Office

\* On occasion bombs have been tied into alarm systems and detonated when the alarm system is activated.

If there has been an explosion, employees are to be aware of any hazards created by the explosion such as exposed electrical wires, fallen objects, etc. Employees are to look for anything unusual that may indicate additional explosive materials or other hazards while on the way to the meeting area and report any findings to the department head, evacuation representative, and Responders.

## **EARTHQUAKE**

In an earthquake, employees inside a building are to take action and assist others to:

- DUCK under a sturdy desk or table or crouch near an inside wall
- COVER their heads and eyes and turn away from glass or mirrors that may break
- HOLD onto the desk or table to keep it above them

After shaking has stopped, employees are to evaluate the area, looking for injured persons and for new hazards, and then proceed with evacuating via the safest route. Should the inside area be hazardous due to exposed electrical wires or other hazards, and if there is no immediate threat from any other danger, employees may shelter in place until the area can be made safe by Responders.

In case of an earthquake when employees are outside of a building, they are to:

- Stay clear of overhead utility lines, buildings, bridges or other structures
- Proceed to the evacuation meeting site and await instruction

If you are off site from your department when an earthquake strikes, contact your Supervisor for direction.

## **EVACUATION**

“Evacuation” means that all persons must leave the affected building. After an alarm is sounded, or verbal notification is given to evacuate

Employees will:

- Secure financial instruments (cash, checks, etc.)
- Immediately exit the building via the closest exit route, assisting others as needed
- Not attempt to carry out nonessential equipment or personal belongings
- Not use elevators
- Walk, not run
- Stay calm
- Proceed to the designated evacuation meeting site for their department
- Assist supervisors in accounting for missing personnel
- Remain at the meeting site awaiting further instruction

Evacuation Representatives will

- Check conference rooms, public rooms or other enclosed spaces to ensure that all persons within their area have evacuated
- Direct and assist a safe and orderly evacuation
- Assist, or arrange for, extra assistance to persons with special needs
- Proceed to the evacuation meeting site and receive the headcount report from supervisors
- Notify the department head of the status of employees

**Department Heads will:**

- \* Notify the on-scene Responders if employees are unaccounted for and provide information on where they may possibly be within the building
- \* Notify the County Managers Office or Crisis Action Team of the evacuation
- \* Provide employees direction on further actions to take

Each department will designate at least one person from every area for every shift to act as an Evacuation Representative who will receive training on their duties during an emergency situation.

Department Heads must be made aware of employees working or absent from the premises when an emergency occurs, as well as non-employees who may be in their departments. Accounting for employees and non-employees will aid Responders in determining whether rescue efforts are necessary.

No employees are to return to the building(s) until advised by Facilities, County Manager, Risk Management, Responders, Department Heads or their designees after the determination has been made that re-entry is safe.

**SHELTER IN PLACE**

"Shelter-in-place" means taking refuge within the facility as danger MAY be in the vicinity of or on County property. In some situations such as a natural disaster, chemical release from a truck, railcar, or other outside source, or a civil disturbance, etc., it is safer to remain within the facility than to be outside and potentially exposed to the hazard.

**Employees will:**

- Stay inside the building
- Close doors, windows, blinds, shades and curtains
- Proceed to the department designated Shelter in Place location
- If there is potential of a dangerous person entering the building, lock public entry doors
- Remain in place awaiting further instruction

**Evacuation Representatives will:**

- Gather emergency supplies
- Account for all persons within the Shelter In Place area
- If there is potential of contamination, secure the area per the department procedures

**Department Heads will:**

- \* Call 911/9-911
- \* Notify the Crisis Action Team
- \* Notify the on-scene Responders if employees are unaccounted for and provide information on where they may possibly be within the building
- \* Provide employees direction on further actions to take



## **LOCKDOWN**

"Lockdown" means taking refuge within the facility when there is IMMEDIATE DANGER in the vicinity of or on County property. Especially when there are situations such as a violent person, it is safer to stay in a locked indoor space than to be outside and exposed to the hazard.

When given direction to lockdown, or upon witnessing an immediate threat, employees are to immediately:

- Call 911/9-911 when safe to do so
- Lock public entry doors (if the threat is outside and not inside the building)
- Go to the closest protected area and lock the internal door(s)
- Lock windows, close blinds, shades, curtains, and move away from the windows
- Barricade the door if possible
- Sit down on the floor
- Remain silent \*
- Do not allow anyone into or out of the area
- Remain in the area and await further instruction from law enforcement ONLY

\*It is imperative that employees locations are not discovered during lockdown so personal phone calls are not allowed. Phone calls to Responders or County Management are to be made by the Department Head only, on a limited basis, and only when safe to do so.

Any emergency situation may result in the need to have an evaluation of the facility to ensure its safety and the institution of the Continuity of Operations Plan. Department Heads will inform employees of actions required.

## **SECTION 5: TRAINING**

Employees will receive training on their area building plans, exit routes, fire extinguisher locations, alarm pull station locations, designated evacuation meeting sites, and any department specific procedures. They will receive this training:

- Initially when the plan is approved,
- When the employee is assigned to a job,
- Whenever an employee's responsibilities or designated actions under the plan change,
- Whenever new equipment, materials, or processes are introduced into the workplace,
- Whenever the layout or design or the facility changes, and
- Whenever the plan is changed.

The department Emergency Action Plan material given to employees during training may contain personal phone numbers of County personnel. Personal phone numbers are to be kept in a safe place, not to be distributed to anyone who does not have a business need to know, and used in the event of an emergency only.

## **SECTION 6: DRILLS**

Washoe County will perform drills for Evacuation, Shelter-In-Place and Lockdown.

Drills of emergency actions are to take place no less than annually at each County facility.

Following drills, the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan will be evaluated. Input from employees regarding the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan is encouraged so the plans may be updated and improved.